

DEBORAH'S GARDEN TOADS.

BY ELIZA ORNE WHITE.

THE evening before the Wyatts' departure for the mountains, Mrs. Lutterworth had come in to bid them good-by.

Miss Deborah was in a despondent mood, a rare thing with her. "I wish to goodness John had never sent us the where-withal for a summer vacation," she observed. "When you have money given you for a certain purpose, if you feel bound to spend it in just that way, but I am homesick already when I think of having to leave home."

"Me, and the rest of your friends?" Mrs. Lutterworth inquired.

"No, the garden. I can't help thinking of all the caterpillars and cut-worms and beetles that will have a feast. Patrick is so careless."

"Miss Deborah, I believe you love the garden better than anything in the world but your sisters and the cat."

"The cat and your sisters, you should have said," interpolated Miss Letitia.

"It isn't very flattering," Mrs. Lutterworth went on in her vivacious way. "You can't bear to leave the garden, and you love the cat so well you take him with you, but you can say good-by to me without a pang."

"Sarah Lutterworth, I have such perfect confidence in your power to look after yourself and others that I can leave you with an easy mind, whereas Mr. Gray, poor dear creature, would be lost without me, and so I very much fear will the garden."

Miss Deborah's fears proved true prophesies. When she and Lucy came home from the mountains a week earlier than they first planned, a period of drought had joined to Patrick's conscience, that was not of New England origin, had turned their once blooming garden into an insect-paradise.

Miss Deborah went from one patch of flowers to another, mourning their fate in an ever-increasing crescendo of despair.

"Lucy, the sweet peas are blighted," she announced. "The dry weather has been too much for them. I wish we could have imported some from the States."

"Lucy, the dahlias, Lucy! They are dying up! The garden hasn't been watered properly. I knew how it would be. Look at those blue-beetled Heavens! What a looking garden! And the corn! Cut-worms have been at work there! Patrick O'Halloran, what were you thinking of?"

"Shure, ma'am, I didn't create the cut-worms," he said sulkily.

"I am aware of that. I never accused you of having ingenuously enough to create anything. Why under the sun didn't you water things properly?"

"Shure, ma'am, I was watering and watering, until I nearly got a sunstroke, and then the hose busted."

"Well, if it hadn't been for Clara Simonds and Frances, we shouldn't have anything left," said Miss Deborah.

"Now, are you going to get your new hose. There is one comfort, their garden is in almost as bad a condition. What am I saying? I mean, you can't be comfortable in a thing like that. I am glad Letitia is away. The state of the garden would annoy her exceedingly."

Deborah and Lucy missed their sister, but there was a kind of freedom that came with her absence which was almost intoxicating. They took their tea in the woods two or three times a week, and on pleasant mornings had their breakfast served on the piazza. They ate baked beans and brown bread as often as they liked, and on a rainy day, when the occasion went so far as to indulge in a roast of pork. They even lost their heads to such an extent as to invite old Peter Newhall to spend a day with them. All these things occurred, however, after Miss Deborah's coup d'etat concerning the garden.

"I am sure the flowers would do better if we could import a few toads to eat up the insects," she said to Lucy the morning after their return.

"How are you going to get your toads?" Lucy asked languidly.

"Lucy Wyatt! You are the most un-

enterprising person! You are not lazy; you'd water and weed, and water and weed until your back broke, but it would never occur to you to improve matters. Listen to this extract from the Farmer's Voice:

"Centipedes, caterpillars, blister-beetles and bugs of every description are equally welcome by the toads. Half a dozen toads in a garden will keep it free from the ordinary garden pests. They are easily tamed and spend the day in some shaded nook along the fence or under a cabbage leaf, coming sedately forth at night to find their food. There are toads enough in town. I shall offer to pay Patrick five cents for every toad he brings. Patrick proved to be no more enterprising than Lucy, and Miss Deborah was obliged to take more stringent measures. Hence this rather unusual advertisement.

"I wish Letitia were here to put this advertisement in proper shape," she said. "Letitia is so clever with her pen. But I can't wait to send this to Newport, and I suppose she would think my scheme crazy. I have decided to advertise in the County News for toads. There are plenty of toads in Eppingham and plenty of children. The only thing is to devise a scheme to bring them together. How does this read?"

"WANTED TOADS! That will attract the eyes of the most hardened reader."

"Children, here is your chance. Five cents reward for every toad brought to No. 52 Main street, Eppingham. No frogs need apply."

"I think it would be a little more dignified to leave that out about the children, and say five cents will be given for every toad brought to No. 52 Main street, Eppingham, frogs not desired," said Lucy with hesitation.

"It would take all the spice out of the advertisement to alter it; it can't be very dignified, no matter how you word it," said Miss Deborah, with a little laugh.

"I am glad Letitia is not at home. She would find it such a deplorable thing to always say I wanted my fling, and now I am having it."

"Aren't you afraid of getting too many toads if you advertise in a paper?" Lucy asked timidly.

"Too many! My dear Lucy, Patrick has been hunting the toads the last two days and hasn't found one. I am afraid I shan't get enough. I don't expect more than ten or twelve at the outside."

Lucy went down to the office and the County News with her sister, who requested the editor to put the advertisement in two issues of his semi-weekly paper. This was a little expensive, but Miss Deborah was sure it was better to give her experiment a fair trial. The paper was issued on Saturday morning, and the day passed with no results. Early Sunday morning, just as the sisters were finishing their baked beans, the doorbell rang, and Bridget came in with a broad smile on her face.

"Lucy, ma'am, a boy and girl want to see you, and they've got something in a basket."

"Toads," ejaculated Miss Deborah, and rose hastily.

"We saw an advertisement as said you wanted toads," the little girl explained shyly.

Miss Deborah opened the cover of the basket. "They are frogs," she cried. "I especially said I did not want frogs. If you can't tell a frog from a toad, you had better go to vacation school. I am not going to give you a blessed cent, not one, and you can take these frogs back to the bog where you got them."

A pitiful expression came into the faces of the children. They turned away sadly and silently. Their torn clothes and general air of dejection went straight to Miss Deborah's kind heart.

"Do you like baked beans?" she inquired in a conciliatory tone.

You bet, said the boy.

Lucy ushered them into the dining room, where Lucy was finishing her coffee.

"You didn't have much breakfast, I suppose," she hazarded, as they humbly dispatched the baked beans and brown bread.

Russia has always boasted of her army. It has been estimated that the total war footing of the Russian army after cutting out all the reserves amounts to 5,250,000 men, or more than ten times that of Japan. In times of peace 1,200,000 young men are annually liable to military service. For military purposes the empire is divided into thirteen districts, each under a high general officer. The soldiers are drawn from the ignorant peasant class, and the officers from the governing ranks of society. Should Russia call out all her troops she will have 78,327 officers, 5,180,958 soldiers, 13,400 horses and 4,000 cannon. Germany is the only nation that exceeds Russia in its military equipment. The German army has 2,100,000 men, 100,000 officers and 5,555,000 men. In case of dire necessity, however, Russia could call on the remainder of her male population, and thus add an army that would be the greatest the modern world has ever seen.

The wealth of Russia has increased most rapidly in the last twenty years. The chief financial institution of the Russians is the Bank of Russia, which has 12 branches throughout the empire. The paper currency of the empire is issued by this bank. Its capital is \$26,000,000, and its total issue of paper in January, 1903, was \$25,000,000, with a guarantee fund of nearly \$500,000,000. The estimated stock of Russian gold for last year was \$74,000,000 (twelve times more than that of Japan), and of silver, \$104,000,000 (three and one-third times more than Japan's). The records of all the various banks show 4,517,342 depositors; \$491,317,622 in deposits, with an average deposit for each inhabitant of \$3.48.

Much of Russia's internal trade is still carried on at great fairs, of which seven are still held annually at Moscow, Yekaterinburg, Kursk, Irit and Nishni-Novgorod. The exports and imports from other countries for the whole empire in 1900 amounted to \$27,000,000, or nearly three times those of Japan. Of this trade the imports into European Russia amounted to \$22,700,000, and into Asiatic Russia, \$4,300,000. Exports across the European boundaries amounted to \$369,200,000, and the Asiatic \$11,220,000. Among Russia's chief imports are raw and refined cotton, wool, silk, leather, hides, skins and chemicals comprising one-half. Cereals and flour comprise half of Russia's exports, others being timber, naphtha, flax and hemp, oil, cake, oil grains, and other raw materials.

Russia deals most largely with Germany, as the following figures for the

"No, ma'am. We had to be up very early, we wanted to get ahead of the Baxter boys."

"Are they looking for toads?"

"There's four Baxter boys, and we was afraid mebbe you'd have all the toads you wanted before we come along, so we got up at 4 o'clock."

When Miss Deborah made them goodby she had related so far as to say, "You can take the frogs back, but I'll give you ten cents each on account of your trouble."

Miss Deborah and Lucy were just starting for church and were walking sedately down Main street, in their gaily rustling summer silks, holding their ponies parasols to shield them from the torrid rays of the sun, when they met a straggling procession of four unkempt children.

A chance like this, or disappoint these children. I hope you have brought me toads and not frogs."

"They are toads all right," said the oldest boy lifting the corner of his pall, and allowing Miss Deborah to look inside, where she saw a merry company of six bright-eyed toads. "There's eight in Jim's bag."

Miss Deborah made a rapid calculation. "Five times fourteen are seventy cents," she said, "and Bridget hasn't got home from her early mass—she must have stopped at her brother's; there is nothing for it but to go back. Lucy, go on to church, and if I don't get there, for heaven's sake don't tell Mrs. Lutterworth the reason why. I do, Lucy. He like a—Filipino say I am ill, that I mind the heat; say anything but the truth. If Sarah Lutter-

up the broad aisle as unobtrusively as she could, but she was conscious of innumerable eyes fixed upon her. She knew everyone was wondering why Deborah was not there, Deborah, who never missed a Sunday at church.

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"No," said Lucy, "she feels the heat a little."

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"She wouldn't have stayed at home merely for that, but—the fact is she was detained by callers who came just

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Tears came into the eyes of the small girl. "The paper said the lady would pay 5 cents for every toad," she remarked in a faltering voice.

"You can never believe all you see in the paper," said Miss Deborah with dignity.

The little girl lifted up the cover of the basket in a hesitating way. "There's six, and we worked real hard to get them," she said.

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"I suppose they all happened along of their own accord?" John inquired nonchalantly.

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